

Dismantling Strongholds – Bible Study Notes

Introduction

Acts 10: 9-16 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”

But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”

And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

We are looking at the importance of breaking out of the old in order to tap into new. God always has something new for us. Even when He engages the old things in our lives, he produces new. We don't have to be stuck in anything. We don't have to give in to the thought of growth and expansion.

We see in the passage we have just read a historical moment in the plan of God to bring about something new in the earth, the new covenant, but notice that God had to fix the mindset of one of His key partners Peter. He challenges His mindset because you can't create a new thing with an old mindset. So if we don't address our mindset, we can sabotage the new thing that God is looking to create in our lives. If Peter did not change his attitude towards the gentiles, he would have hindered the plan of God for us.

I believe that God is looking to do certain things in our time that will reverberate for generations to come. The decisions we make, the actions we take have an impact on future generations. This is why we cannot afford to have you thinking in the old, because God has prepared something new and better.

So this is what we have been dealing with. More recently we have been looking at what the bible calls strongholds. A stronghold is a fortress of thought. A stronghold is a pattern of thinking. It is an established way of thinking, a strong way of seeing yourself and the world around you. It is your set way of thinking. It is positive, when it is in alignment with the Word of God. It is negative when it is in opposition to the will of God.

Last week we looked at how they are formed. This week we'll be looking at how we can pull down negative strongholds.

Dismantling Strongholds

2 Corinthians 10:4 - For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Paul is really arresting the culture of the day and the strongholds in the minds of the people in that area. And he says that the weapons of our warfare against these strongholds are not carnal, but they are mighty!

Please note two things:

Strongholds can be pulled down. Believe that! Sometimes when you have a stronghold, a way of thinking that has kept you trapped in insecurity, a pattern of thinking that keeps your relationship at a particular level, that keeps your income at a particular level, a pattern of thinking that keeps you stuck in an addictive behaviour, one of the things that the enemy does is to convince you that it is impossible to break out of that pattern of thinking. The enemy convinces you that this is your normal.

And what's dangerous is that you believe that, and you can even pass that on! This is what I believe is at the heart of generational curses! We have all been redeemed from the curse...including generational curses. However if you accept a mindset that contradicts the will of God, you can and will be trapped in the same limitations that previous generations got stuck in!

This is why you need to believe that every stronghold can be broken. We can pull them down! Believe that!

We have the right weapons to pull them down. This means that we have what it takes to change things. We might be stuck right now, but we have what it takes to break out.

You cannot pull down strongholds without the spiritual weapon of the Word. The real weapon for pulling down strongholds is the Word. **Ephesians 6** talks about the whole armour of God and the Word is given as the only offensive weapon. You stop thoughts with Words. And the Word of God is the purest Word, the most potent type of Word to pull down strongholds.

This is why in everything that we are getting, we must be rooted and grounded in the Word, because the weapon of our warfare to pull down and really change culture, traditions, ways of thinking that opposes what God wants to do in our lives is the word. In the beginning was the Word. The sower is still sowing the Word. In the end the Word will have the last say.

Let's look at some practical ways to dismantle these strongholds then. These are not exhaustive, but they will give us somewhere to start. I also have to say that these are not magic pills. Today all I believe the Lord is asking for is that you seek to understand, and you commit yourself to transformation. But remember that in all of these things, His grace is sufficient. Our sufficiency is of Him and not of ourselves.

How to dismantle strongholds

1. Take responsibility for your Thought life.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,”
Philippians 2:5 NKJV

Notice that we can choose which mind to operate from. But we have got to first take responsibility for our thought life. here's is a strong truth: **The mind you have right now is the mind that you LET BE IN YOU.**

Now that's a strong statement, it's a strong statement because there are ways of thinking that were handed down to us by our parents, by the culture we were born into, by the terrible thing that happened to you, without your permission! Someone took advantage of you when you didn't know better. Someone lied to you when you trusted them...and now you're stuck in a cycle that you didn't ask for...so I accept that it is unfair to make that statement when you consider all I've just said. And If we were talking about being fair, you will be right.

However I am not speaking about what is fair, I am talking about freedom from strongholds. I am saying that as unfair as it is, you can be free from all of that, and the first step is to take responsibility for your thought life! You might not have started it, but you can choose to finish it!

Your freedom begins when you make a decision to choose which mind you will have. It begins when you say to the abuser who refused to acknowledge what they've done to you; you've had my mind long enough! Your freedom begins when you say about that experience that marked you, and birthed that fear...ok, today I am taking my mind back! Your mind does not belong to your failure, your mind does not belong to those that

wronged you, your mind belongs to you. The moment you choose to take responsibility for your own mind, you also start to strip everything else of the power to determine your future.

Let this mind be in you! Somebody might have forced a fearful mind on you, circumstances might have forced a bitter unforgiving mind on you, but today the Lord is inviting you to decide that I am choosing the same mind that was in Christ...**1 Corinthians 2:16 says For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.**

We have the mind of Christ. The freedom from strongholds begins when you choose to use the mind of Christ that you have.

When we do not take responsibility for our mind we abdicate the responsibility for the state of our mind to our circumstances, or to popular opinion, or to something that happened to you...and you cannot guarantee what kind of mind you will get...but when you choose the mind of Christ, you start yourself off on the road to freedom from old mindsets.

How do I take responsibility for my thought life?

- Decide the kind of future you want. Don't leave your future to the economy to decide! Don't leave your future to corona virus to decide. **Jeremiah 29:11 I recommend you choose the same kind of future that God is planning for you.**
- Decide on the kinds of thoughts that will get you that future. You can't think bitter nasty thoughts about people and expect a new future without bitterness. You can't think like a slave and end up in the future of a son. If you want to live as the child of God that you are, make a decision on the kind of thoughts that you will think! - **Philippians 4:6 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.** Choose your thoughts. Write them down. Think about them.
- Make a decision about the kind of thoughts you are going to think by deciding the kind of words you will live under. What kind of words brought about the thoughts that eventually became a stronghold? What kind of words do you think you need to keep listening to if you want to change your thoughts? Find those words! Climb mountains and cross oceans to find those Words!